

Registration of Employee Worksite Preference

On March 26, 2020, Dr. Bonnie Henry, the Provincial Health Officer (“PHO”), issued two orders: *Information Collection to Allocate Staff WORKING IN FACILITIES* (the “Data Collection Order”) and *Long-Term Care Facility Staff Movement Limitation* (“the Bridging Order”). HEABC issued GIU 290 the same day to provide guidance to employers on these two orders.

The Bridging Order enabled medical health officers to restrict staff from working at more than one long term care facility, and from working at a long term care and an acute care facility. The Data Collection Order stated that, where practicable, employee preference will be considered in the decision making of the PHO regarding the worksites to which employees will be assigned. The Data Collection Order covers employees who work at long term care facilities, provincial mental health facilities, hospitals, extended care centres and rehabilitation centres.

Affected Employers and Individuals

Any employee who works at more than one healthcare worksite covered by the Data Collection Order may register their worksite preference at the [BC Health Staffing website \(https://bchealthstaffing.ca/\)](https://bchealthstaffing.ca/)

Employee Preference

The purpose of collecting employee preference is to allow, where practicable, the PHO to consider this factor in decision making regarding assigning employees to worksites. Submitting preferences does not mean that employee preference will be considered in every case. Operational and epidemiological factors will take precedence.

Questions and Answers

Q: What is BC Health Staffing?

A: BC Health Staffing is a centralized staffing approach being coordinated by the Provincial Health Office and the Ministry of Health. The approach will help ensure we maintain adequate staffing across the health sector. The central staffing process will review staffing requirements and available staff resources for each worksite affected by orders of the Provincial Health Officer and Medical Health Officers that restrict the movement of staff between worksites.

Q: Is this centralized approach permanent?

A: It will be in effect as long as necessary to help prevent the spread of COVID-19.

Q: Will health authorities and individual sites be involved in allocating staff resources or will it all be coordinated at a provincial level?

A: As part of the centralized staffing approach, the Ministry of Health and the Provincial Health Office will ensure that health authorities and individual sites are consulted to ensure operational needs are met. And, in order to maintain site-specific knowledge and ensure continuity of care, we will work to ensure that as many employees as possible will remain at sites where they hold a regular position.

Q. Why is HEABC involved?

A: HEABC represents many publicly-funded health care employers in BC, and is providing assistance to the Provincial Health Office to establish BC Health Staffing under their direction. HEABC does not manage BC Health Staffing and is not in charge of the final decision making with respect to the assignment of individual staff to specific worksites.

Q. Does the employee worksite preference website apply to all staff? What are the exemptions?

A. The Data Collection Order covers staff who work at long term care facilities, provincial mental health facilities, hospitals, extended care centres and rehabilitation centres. All staff, including employees, managers and supervisors who are routinely present at facilities are included. However, the following are exempt and do not have to provide a preference:

1. Physicians,
2. Resident Physicians,
3. Nurse practitioners,
4. Paramedics,
5. Delivery persons,
6. Trades people,
7. Visitors, or
8. Any other class of person exempted by the Provincial Health Officer

Q. Are casual employees exempt?

A. No, casual employees are covered by both orders and may be restricted to work at a single site.

Q. Could you clarify if this is for physicians as well?

A. No. Physicians are not included.

Q. This means that staff have 48 hours to choose their preferred workplace over the weekend?

A. Yes, preference must be submitted by **5:00 pm Sunday, March 29, 2020.**

Q. Do the Bridging Order and Data Collection Order and the GIU apply to organizations that are not members of HEABC?

A. Both orders apply to both HEABC members and non-HEABC members if they meet the criteria set out in the orders. This means employers of long term care facilities, provincial mental health facilities, hospitals, extended care centres and rehabilitation centres. The GIU explains the orders and should be followed by any organization that is following the order.

Q. How will employees who are not covered by HEABC's provincial collective agreements be paid?

A. The Ministry of Health advises HEABC that employees will receive the hourly wage rate equivalent to HEABC collective agreements for the duration of the single worksite restriction period.

- Q. There appears to be exemptions, will it be individual basis or profession based? If individual, how do employees apply for them?**
- A. Employees do not apply for exemptions. The Provincial Health Officer will issue further orders that define the scope of single site restrictions including any restrictions based on profession. Employers and employees should review those orders when issued.
- Q. After April 2nd, will there be period of time for departments / employees working multi-sites to transition their schedules?**
- A. BC Health Staffing, under the Office of the Provincial Health Officer, will make directions as to cohorting staff to worksites. Employers will be responsible for scheduling staff. Employees should continue to work their scheduled shifts at their scheduled worksites until they are notified otherwise.
- Q. Will this be mandated between health authorities or just within each health authority? (i.e. Employee working a VCH site be ineligible to work at a FHA site casually)**
- A. Employees may be restricted to work at a single site regardless of health authority. An employee would not be permitted to work at any other sites in any other health authorities.
- Q. Will I experience a loss in hours or pay if I am assigned to a single site?**
- A. The objective is to avoid negative impact to employees as a result of being assigned to a single site. Employers will make every effort to ensure employees continue to work the same FTE they worked prior to the change. All employees will be encouraged to maximize their hours regardless of their current employment status.
- Q. What happens with all pre-booked shifts until June if we are mandated to only one site? And if you cannot re-book those shifts lost because you can no longer work at more than one site how does the difference in pay get made up?**
- A. Employees will continue to work scheduled shifts. The goal is to maintain at least the current maximum hours in the health care system. All employees will be encouraged to maximize their hours regardless of status.
- Q. Is my SIN number secure on the employee selection website?**
- A. The privacy and security of employee's personal information will be strictly protected. The data will be reviewed by BC Health Staffing for the purpose of informing the Provincial Health Officer's decisions about assigning health care workers to work at a single site.

HEABC contact

Questions about this document should be directed to your HEABC representative.